

***Section II — A Vision for Riverside***



***The Vision Statement broadly defines Riverside’s vision of its future. The Major Planning Concepts describe the City’s approach to 14 significant community issues that, together, will shape the “Quality City” envisioned by the people of Riverside.***



### **A. Vision Statement**

*In the Year 2010, Riverside will continue to be a “Quality City” and a community of choice for residents, visitors and commerce. Diverse neighborhoods with distinct identities will provide a highly desirable living environment for people working in Riverside and in Southern California’s other economic centers. The Downtown and other areas of economic activity will offer attractive locations for the growth of existing and emerging businesses and will provide employment opportunities for local residents. Throughout the City, its unique natural setting, high quality urban design, accessible open space and greenbelt areas, and diverse public services and amenities will give residents and visitors the sense of a “special” place which has successfully blended its agricultural heritage and historic past with its role as the preeminent economic, cultural and arts center of the Inland Empire in the Twenty-First Century.*



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### ***B. Major Planning Concepts***

The Vision Statement describes Riverside as a city that builds on its past and present character to create a diverse and distinctive community of quality for the future. This is a plan for that “*Quality City*”. This plan was selected by the Citizens’ Advisory Committee and approved by the City Council following discussion of other plan alternatives. It was chosen because it offers the best combination of Riverside’s historic character and amenities with a design to meet the needs of continuing growth.

Fourteen planning concepts establish a means to achieve this Vision. These major concepts provide the general policy direction which is then detailed in the Plan Elements’ goals and policies. Exhibit 3 (Page II - 5) illustrates many of these planning concepts; it shows the significant areas and features that will contribute to the Riverside of the Year 2010.

***1. The City’s natural resources — the Santa Ana River, the hillsides, mountains and arroyos — must remain as integral parts of the community’s physical and aesthetic character and as distinctive visual boundaries separating Riverside from its neighboring communities.***

Riverside has many unique and attractive natural land forms. Many major U.S. cities have used similar distinctive physical features and open spaces to shape their character; significant examples include Boston’s “Emerald Necklace”, San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park, and San Antonio’s River Walk, to name a few. Riverside has many natural amenities which form a “Circle around the City.” This gives Riverside the potential to create a spectacular system of linked open space areas. The Santa Ana River, along the northerly edge of the City, provides a strong natural dividing line between Riverside and its neighbors. The River’s adjacent parks offer trails, picnic areas, playfields and other recreational opportunities. The riparian ecosystems along the River are also important habitats for native plant and animal species.

Box Springs Mountain County Regional Park and Sycamore Canyon Park provide open spaces with a different character — the arroyos and ridgelines in these parks create a dramatic backdrop for the City, provide a natural refuge for wildlife, including rare local species, and retain welcome undeveloped islands with the urban area.

The agricultural lands in the south central part of Riverside provide a sense of open space, an economic use, and an important link to Riverside’s agricultural history. The historical significance of this area is recognized by the location here of the California Citrus State Historic Park, a unique park commemorating and preserving the role of citrus farming in the development of the State. Surrounding the park, the Arlington Greenbelt is a significant location for agricultural uses and a major open space area within the urban community.



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### **Exhibit II - 1:           General Plan Concept** *(Formerly Exhibit 3)*



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The southern part of the “Circle” is also mountainous, with Lake Mathews offering a distinctive amenity and gateway feature for Riverside. The westerly edge of the City is again defined by hillsides. The Norco Hills complete the “Circle around the City” and separate Riverside from neighboring communities.

The “Circle around the City” idea uses major natural features to define the City’s boundaries and to create a strong sense of Riverside’s distinctive location and character. As parts of an open space system, the “gems” along this circle should be readily visible, accessible to the public and managed to provide environmental, recreational and educational benefits. These areas should also be connected whenever possible by linkages, such as roads and trails, so residents and visitors can easily travel the circle and enjoy the City’s natural amenities.

### ***2. The agricultural heritage of Riverside should be protected.***

The citizens of Riverside have long been concerned with protecting agricultural uses within the community. The City’s efforts to retain agricultural uses are reflected in the General Plan. Land use categories identify areas suitable for agricultural use, along with related residential uses. The Plan’s policies support action by the City to help minimize the conversion of viable agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses.

### ***3. Downtown Riverside should continue to be the central focus for the City’s commercial, governmental, cultural and arts activities.***

Riverside’s Downtown is one of its most valuable resources. The historic structures, the government buildings and the commercial development are a central focus for the community and a statement of the City’s heritage and tradition. The General Plan builds upon previous City planning and redevelopment programs for Downtown. Policies addressing economic development, community character and transportation, among others, continue to emphasize Downtown and its continuing viability.

### ***4. Distinctive gateways should clearly identify entrances into this City and help define its limits.***

Travelers, and residents as well, should know when they enter the City of Riverside. For some major travel routes, topography alone provides a form of “entrance” to the City. Other routes lack a distinct community entrance. The General Plan proposes distinctive “gateways” at ten major community entrances. These are shown on Exhibit 3 (Page II - 5).

For each gateway, the City should develop a design which clearly identifies the entrance. Some design elements could be repeated at many gateways, to create a consistent design theme. For example, signage with the City’s distinctive Raincross could be used at many gateways. Other design elements must be scaled to be appropriate to the type of travel (freeway or rural parkway, for example) or to the surrounding land uses. Landscaping will be a vital part of gateway design as well.



**5. *The viability of existing neighborhoods should be preserved and the unique character of each should be enhanced.***

Development of property within or adjacent to an existing neighborhood has the potential to either strengthen or threaten the character of that neighborhood. The General Plan supports “infill” development — development on vacant or under-utilized properties within already urbanized areas — as an efficient way to accommodate new growth. The land uses and intensities for infill development have been planned to be compatible with the existing neighborhoods to maintain the current neighborhood character. Design guidelines and other development standards will also be used to promote compatibility.

Development on the edges of existing neighborhoods has been planned, in most cases, to reduce intrusion of other uses into the neighborhoods. For neighborhoods in transition from residential to other uses, the General Plan provides for appropriate land uses and establishes a new “edge” for nearby stable neighborhoods.

**6. *Transportation corridors should link neighborhoods and centers within Riverside and should link Riverside with the region surrounding it.***

A community’s transportation system is a crucial determinant of that community’s character and livability. An efficient transportation system, with adequate capacity to meet the community’s needs, can reduce the time and resource costs of living and working in an area. On the other hand, traffic congestion, resulting from an inadequate system, is one of the factors residents associate most frequently with a decreased quality of life. The General Plan supports a multi-modal system to meet Riverside’s transportation needs as effectively as possible, in coordination with the efforts of other Regional transportation providers.

A transportation system can do more than meet residents’ basic travel needs. The character of major roads and pathways can reinforce the desired characteristics of individual neighborhoods and of the entire community. The significance of transportation to community design has long been recognized in the City of Riverside. The City’s first General Plan, prepared by Charles Henry Cheney and adopted in 1928, proposed a Round-the-City Drive as a major community design feature. This Drive consisted of a series of landscaped parkways intended to “lead past the principal parks and scenic views of the City, showing them to the best advantage of local people.”<sup>1</sup> This concept of scenic routes, linking major open space areas and activity centers, is revived in this new General Plan.

The General Plan concept diagram, depicted in Exhibit 3 (Page II - 5), identifies the City’s major transportation corridors. These corridors are planned to adequately serve automobile travel; they may also include other travel modes — public transit,

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<sup>1</sup> Cheney, Charles Henry. Recreation, Civic Center and Regional Plan. June 1929. P. 13.



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bicycle, equestrian and pedestrian travel. A trails system will provide additional routes for non-motorized travel.

- 7. The City intends to accommodate continuing, steady growth that is compatible with the community's character and resources; however, quality-related goals will be the dominant force influencing decisions related to growth and development.***

The land uses planned as part of this General Plan are sufficient to accommodate the community's anticipated growth over the next twenty years. The City intends to plan for, and accommodate, continuing moderate levels of growth during this time. However, the City is especially concerned that new development will contribute positively to the community's character. As a result, planning for more growth has been coupled with policies addressing the quality and character of that growth. In this way, Riverside will continue to provide opportunities for residential, industrial and commercial development while preserving and enhancing the community's character and respecting its natural resources and amenities.

- 8. Diverse employment opportunities should be available to Riverside's residents and the residents of surrounding communities.***

The City's historic role as a major center of the Inland Empire has made it a regional focal point for finance, services and other similar non-residential uses. In addition, public sector institutions have provided a significant and generally stable source of employment for residents. Employment in retail, agriculture, manufacturing and other sectors has resulted in a broad-based economy, not dependent on dramatic growth in a single sector, but able to enjoy steady growth in many areas.

This General Plan supports economic diversity and promotes additional economic development over time. The Plan's Land Use Element provides for ample non-residential development in locations appropriate to a variety of businesses and industries. Other economic development policies support the retention of existing businesses and attraction of new economic activities.

Overall, the Plan's intent is to improve the City's "jobs-housing balance". It provides opportunities for a larger increase in employment than in anticipated labor force. As a result, even more Riverside residents should have the option of working in their own City.

- 9. The unique resources of Riverside's public and non-profit institutions should be the foundation for distinctive cultural, arts, educational and economic centers within the Riverside community.***

Riverside is home to a number of major universities and colleges, including the University of California at Riverside (UCR), La Sierra (formerly Loma Linda)





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University, California Baptist College, and Riverside Community College. It is also the governmental center for the County, with offices of City, County and State government located primarily in the Downtown area. March Air Force Base, just east of the City limits, is another major institutional part of the community fabric. The City is the location of other significant cultural and arts institutions, such as the Riverside Municipal Museum, the Mission Inn and Mission Inn Museum, the Riverside Art Museum and the California Museum of Photography and the Riverside Ballet and Opera and Philharmonic.

The General Plan seeks to build on the strengths of these major institutions and enhance their relationships with the community. The Plan's policies support the continuing growth and vitality of these institutions. For example, land use and transportation policies are compatible with the recommendations of UCR's Long Range Development Plan. The General Plan's economic development policies also build on the strengths represented by these organizations. UCR's research priorities support economic development efforts in areas such as agriculture and related environmental studies and in the health sciences.

These cultural and educational resources will continue to contribute to Riverside's distinctive character, as they create focal points for the City and its neighborhoods. The Plan's community character and cultural and arts facilities policies support the retention, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse and expansion of these facilities, with provisions to ensure that such expansions address the concerns of surrounding neighborhoods.

### ***10. Riverside will take responsibility for meeting its share of the regional need for affordable housing.***

The City of Riverside, although a distinct and separate community, is also an integral part of a much larger region. Within the Southern California Region, the need to provide housing for moderate and lower income individuals transcends individual municipal boundaries. Riverside's planning recognizes the City's responsibility to these individuals. Riverside has historically provided ample low and moderate income housing. The General Plan provides sufficient locations for housing at a variety of residential densities. Riverside will continue its contribution toward meeting the regional housing needs identified by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) in their 1988 *Regional Housing Needs Assessment for Southern California*. Quality and character issues will also have a major role in the implementation of affordable housing goals. Riverside will endeavor to identify and implement other programs to provide low income and affordable housing. Riverside will take responsibility for meeting its fair share of the regional need for low income and affordable housing.



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### ***11. Riverside's neighborhoods should celebrate diversity and offer residents a full range of choices in housing style, cost and neighborhood character.***

In Riverside today, many of the residential areas have distinct identities reflecting their historic origins, the cultural traditions of the residents, and/or major architectural and design periods. This results in a wide range of options for residents, in terms of housing type, architecture, cost and neighborhood character. These distinct neighborhoods are also important to the City's character — they emphasize the history of Riverside's development over many years and reinforce its image as a city of rich diversity as well as high quality.

The General Plan is designed to support and enhance the preservation and growth of distinctive neighborhoods. This diversity should be reflected in future development as well as in existing residential areas. Within individual neighborhoods, whether established or future, public facilities should be located to create focal points for the neighborhood and to make services accessible to residents. Special design themes or amenities will also contribute to neighborhood uniqueness and cohesion. Detailed policies and guidelines will be used to ensure that future private development and future public investments will strengthen each neighborhood's character.

Through support for the preservation and enhancement of many distinct neighborhoods, the City should continue to provide a variety of choices for future residents. Planning for new neighborhoods should follow this pattern as well, providing additional housing diversity, while establishing design themes that will identify these neighborhoods as distinct entities as they grow and change over time.

### ***12. Public services and facilities should be provided which are adequate to meet existing and future needs, which are appropriate to serve particular areas within the City, and which are timed to be available when development occurs.***

Historically, the provision of public services and facilities has been primarily a municipal function. For Riverside, these services are important for achieving the desired community quality. General Plan policies address three critical aspects of service provision: adequacy, appropriateness and timing. For each service, standards are set to define an adequate level of service. The facilities needed to meet the needs of future residents are identified based on these levels of service. Capital financing and operating costs will also be based on these service levels.

While some services must be provided to develop at or above a minimum standard, provision of other services may vary from one part of the community to another. Rural residential areas, for example, do not require the same street design standards as urban areas. They may also have different standards for response times and may use different systems for sewage treatment. Where appropriate, service provision is



tailored to reflect the character and needs of particular new and existing neighborhoods within the City.

The General Plan's policies also address the timing of service provision. As new development occurs, it creates a need for planned public facilities and services. To continue meeting residents' needs as the City grows, the timing of facility construction should be coordinated with the construction and occupancy of new developments.

***13. The City will work with others to address environmental and growth management concerns of regional significance.***

Many of the significant environmental concerns for the City of Riverside are not limited by City boundaries, but are regional in nature. Air quality, water quality, housing, traffic, open space preservation and solid waste management all affect the City of Riverside, yet the City cannot address them alone. The General Plan reflects the City's intent to deal with these regional issues, to the extent they can be affected by municipal policy, and to work with other State, Regional and local governmental agencies to implement an action program for the entire region.

***14. Outward expansion of the City's boundaries should occur in a way that applies major planning concepts, such as protection of neighborhood character and adequate service provision, to areas annexed into the City.***

This General Plan includes a part of Riverside's Sphere of Influence, as well as land that is currently within the incorporated City. Riverside's Sphere of Influence has been established by the Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) pursuant to State law. It includes areas within Riverside County that are adjacent to the City and that may have the potential to be included in Riverside's corporate limits at some time in the future. The portion of the Sphere of Influence not included in the General Plan Area encompasses more than sixty square miles of relatively remote and rural land further to the south. Annexation of this land by Riverside is regarded as a very long-range prospect.

As the City considers annexations, the Plan provides direction in terms of the land use, public service provision and other policies which will apply following annexation. In planning for these areas, the General Plan's Land Use Diagram (*Located in the Map Pocket of this Document*) reflects the character of existing neighborhoods in the Sphere of Influence. The Plan's intent is to give these neighborhoods the same recognition and protection as neighborhoods within the City. Upon annexation, the appropriate policies regarding public services, community character, and resource management will be used to address other public policy issues in these areas.



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The major planning concepts outlined here establish the basic framework for Riverside's General Plan. This set of concepts provides a consistent basis for specific policies, as well as a means to ensure the integration of diverse Plan elements. These concepts are reflected throughout the Plan, in the goals and policies of the individual Plan Elements and in the recommended implementation measures.

